New Zealand edge WI to take 2-1 lead in T20 series

NELSON: Seamer Kyle Jamieson held his nerve in the final over for a second straight game to seal a nine-run victory for New Zealand over the West Indies in a tense finale to the third T20 International in Nelson on Sunday.

The visitors threatened to surpass New Zealand's 177-9 at the Saxton Oval but were dismissed for 168 when Romario Shepherd was caught in the deep off the penultimate ball for a career-best 49.

New Zealand took a 2-1 lead in the five-game series, following a match that emulated the pattern of the first two, with the chasing team falling just short.

West Indies' hopes appeared dashed at 88-8 in the 13th over before Shepherd and fellow seamer Shamar Springer began striking the ball cleanly to the boundary.

The pair combined for 78 off just 6.3 overs before Springer was splendidly caught and bowled by Jacob Duffy for 39 with an over remaining.

Needing 12 to win, the final pair could only score two off Jamieson's first four deliveries before the towering pace bowler removed Shepherd to spark victory celebrations.

Jamieson had also been effective when New Zealand levelled the series in Auckland on Thursday, conceding 12 in the final over of a nerve-jangling three-run victory.

New Zealand lost their way after opener Devon Conway was run out for 56 off 34 balls, with Daryl Mitchell the most effective of the middle order with a lively 41.

Alick Athanaze with 31 and Ackeem Auguste, who scored 24, provided a steady start to the West Indies chase but the loss of six wickets for 35 runs stunted their hopes.

Duffy took 3-36 and Ish Sodhi 3-34, which moved the leg-spinner to third on the all-time list of T20 International wicket-takers with 156.

Sodhi is behind only the 182 victims of Afghanistan's Rashid Khan and the 164 of fellow New Zealander Tim Southee.

"The heart rate was pumping there again. Those death bowlers are doing a great job," Sodhi said. "The West Indies have such power through that lower to middle order.

"It's on show at the moment and the series has been a great spectacle so far."

The fourth T20 is also in Nelson on Monday.—AFP

Scoreboard

NEW ZEALAND:	A. Athanaze c Hay b Sodhi 31
D. Conway run out 56	S. Hope c Robinson b Duffy 1
T. Robinson c&b Forde 23	A. Auguste run out 24
R. Ravindra c Forde b Shepherd 26	S. Rutherford c Sodhi b Bracewell ... 2
D. Mitchell c Springer b Holder ... 41	R. Powell b Sodhi 2
M. Bracewell run out 11	J. Holder c Robinson b Santner ... 3
J. Neesham b Forde 2	R. Shepherd c Mitchell b Jamieson ... 49
M. Santner c Auguste b Springer 4	M. Forde lbw b Sodhi 4
M. Hay c Powell b Holder 2	S. Springer c&b Duffy 39
K. Jamieson run out 4	A. Hosein not out 1
I. Sodhi not out 1	**EXTRAS** (B-1, LB-1, W-5) 7
J. Duffy not out 2	**TOTAL** (all out, 19.5 overs) 168
EXTRAS (LB-1, NB-1, W-3) 5	**FALL OF WICKETS:** 1-13 (Jangoo), 2-15 (Hope), 3-53 (Athanaze), 4-60 (Rutherford), 5-68 (Powell), 6-68 (Auguste), 7-83 (Holder), 8-88 (Forde), 9-166 (Springer)
TOTAL (for nine wkts, 20 overs) ... 177	**BOWLING:** Jamieson 3.5-0-35-1 (1w), Duffy 4-0-36-3 (1w), Bracewell 2-0-7-1, Sodhi 4-0-34-3 (2w), Santner 4-0-29-1 (1w), Neesham 2-0-25-0
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-47 (Robinson), 2-97 (Ravindra), 3-114 (Conway), 4-144 (Bracewell), 5-150 (Neesham), 6-159 (Santner), 7-168 (Hay), 8-169 (Mitchell), 9-175 (Jamieson)	**RESULT:** New Zealand won by nine runs.
BOWLING: Hosein 4-0-50-0, Forde 4-0-20-2 (1w), Shepherd 3-0-23-1, Athanaze 1-0-16-0 (1nb), Holder 4-0-31-2, Springer 4-0-36-1 (1w)	**PLAYER-OF-THE-MATCH:** Ish Sodhi
WEST INDIES:	
A. Jangoo b Duffy 5	

WEST INDIES batter Rovman Powell is cleaned up by New Zealand spinner Ish Sodhi during the third T20 International at the Saxton Oval on Sunday.—AFP

Pakistan clinch HK Sixes title

KOWLOON (Hong Kong): Pakistan won the Hong Kong Sixes title for the sixth time in the history of the competition on Sunday, defeating Kuwait by 43 runs in the final here at the Tin Kwong Road Recreation Ground.

After being invited to bat first, Pakistan totalled 135-3 off the stipulated six overs. Skipper Abbas Afridi cracked an 11-ball 52 – laced with seven sixes and four fours — opener Abdul Samad scored 42 off just 13 with the help of two fours and five sixes while Khawaja Nafay made 22 off just six with the aid of two fours and as many sixes.

Meet Bhavsar claimed three wickets.

The Kuwait batters, who did remarkably well against India and England earlier in the event, failed to come up to the expectations. Adnan Idrees scored 30 off just eight balls, Bhasvar amassed 33 runs off 12 while captain Yasin Patel contributed 14.

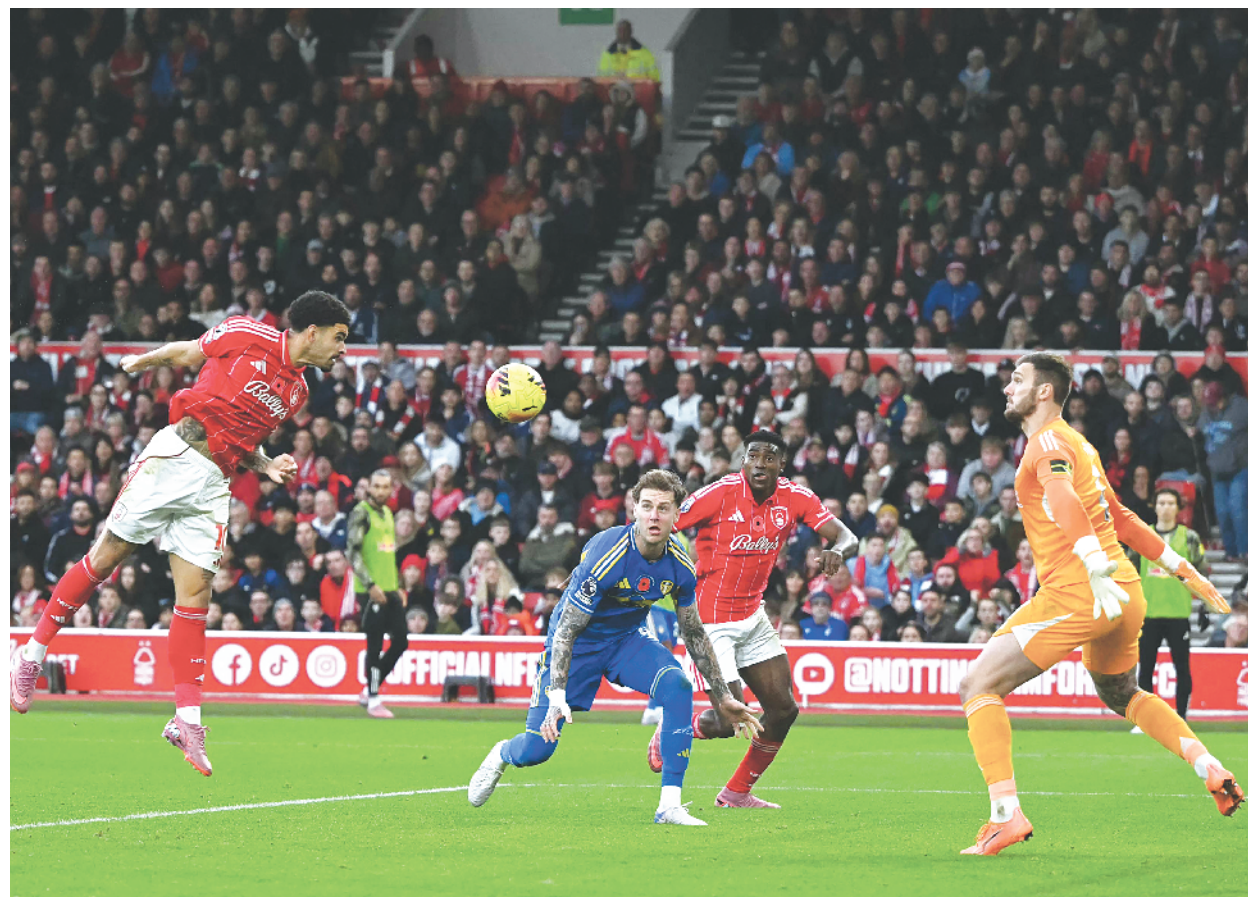
Maaz Sadaqat took three wickets for 29 runs while Abbas and Mohammad Shahzad picked up one apiece.

Abbas received player-of-the-match as well as the player-of-the-tournament honours.

Earlier in the day, Pakistan edged past Australia by one run in a nail-biting semi-final. Nafay's blazing 50 off just 14 balls powered Pakistan to 121 for 2, before tight bowling in the final overs steered Pakistan to victory.

Winners Pakistan received a prize money of $20,000 while Kuwait, the runners-up, were given $15000.

The tournament included 12 main teams, which included South Africa, Afghanistan, Nepal, Australia, England, UAE, India, Pakistan, Kuwait, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Hong Kong (China).—Agencies



NOTTINGHAM: Nottingham Forest's Morgan Gibbs-White (L) heads to score past Leeds United goalkeeper Lucas Perri during their Premier League match at The City Ground on Sunday.—AFP

Forest defeat Leeds to boost survival bid in Premier League

LONDON: Nottingham Forest beat relegation rivals Leeds United 3-1 to secure the first Premier League victory of Sean Dyche's reign.

Dyche's side trailed in the 13th minute at the City Ground when Lukas Nmecha's low drive arrowed into the corner.

But Forest equalised just two minutes later through Ibrahim Sangare's predatory finish from 10 yards.

Morgan Gibbs-White completed Forest's fightback as he glanced a header in from Omari Hutchinson's 68th-minute cross.

Dyche was celebrating again in stoppage-time when Elliot Anderson lashed in a penalty after Hutchinson was bundled over by Jack Harrison.

It was Forest's first league victory since beating Brentford on the opening weekend of the season in August.

Nuno Espirito Santo was in charge of Forest then before being sacked to make way for Ange Postecoglou, whose brief reign also ended with his dismissal before Dyche took charge.

The former Everton and Burnley boss had earned his first Premier League point in last weekend's 2-2 draw with Manchester United.

Dyche's only other win in five games with Forest came in the Europa League against Porto.

Second-bottom Forest's maiden top-flight victory under Dyche's management ended their nine-match winless run in the competition and lifted them to within one point of safety.

Leeds are just two points above Forest after their sixth defeat in 11 league games.

Meanwhile, Aston Villa thrashed Bournemouth 4-0 to make it five wins from their last six league games.

After a slow start to the season, Unai Emery's team are hitting their stride and they struck first at Villa Park when Emiliano Buendia netted with a superb free-kick in the 28th minute.

Amadou Onana increased Villa's advantage, firing home at the climax of a flowing move in the 40th minute.

Morgan Rogers' handball conceded a 67th-minute penalty, but Antoine Semenyo wasted the chance to give Bournemouth a lifeline as his spot-kick was saved by Emiliano Martinez.

Ross Barkley blasted Villa's third goal from Lucas Digne's 77th-minute pass and Donyell Malen's close-range flick put the seal on the victory five minutes later.

At Brentford Newcastle United's miserable away form continued with a dismal 3-1 defeat against the Bees.

Magpies forward Harvey Barnes bagged his 50th Premier League goal in the 27th minute, making space to drill beyond Brentford goalkeeper Caoimhin Kelleher.

But Kevin Schade's 56th-minute strike from Michael Kayode's long throw hauled Brentford level.

Newcastle defender Dan Burn was sent off in the 73rd minute for a second booking after conceding a penalty with a foul on Dango Ouattara.

Brazilian forward Igor Thiago calmly converted from the spot and netted again in stoppage-time to reach nine goals in all competitions this season.

Beaten 3-1 at lowly West Ham United last weekend, Newcastle are languishing in 14th place and have failed to win an away league match in nine attempts since April.

Elsewhere, Crystal Palace and Brighton and Hove Albion shared a 0-0 draw at Selhurst Park to leave both teams in mid-table.

ARSENAL WINNING STREAK ENDS

On Saturday, Arsenal's red-hot winning run came to a dramatic end as Brian Brobbey's acrobatic stoppage-time equaliser earned Sunderland a 2-2 draw.

Mikel Arteta's side have 26 points and a six-point lead over London rivals Chelsea.

Chelsea climbed to second in the table with a 3-0 thrashing of bottom team Wolverhampton Wanderers that extended the visitors' miserable losing streak.

At the Stadium of Light, Dan Ballard put high-flying Sunderland in front after 36 minutes, the first time Arsenal's defence had been breached in nine matches.

But Arsenal looked poised for an 11th straight win after Bukayo Saka and Leandro Trossard, with an unstoppable shot past Robin Roefs, overturned the home side's lead.

Brobbey, however, struck in the 94th minute with great athleticism in volleying past David Raya from close range to deny the leaders three points and send the crowd into raptures.

Ballard said the draw, which leaves Sunderland in a lofty fourth spot on 19 points, felt like a win.

"I'd say so, it's a good morale boost to show we can go against a really top team — probably one of the best in Europe at the minute — and delighted with that," he told the BBC.

"But it is just one point and we've got a lot of work to do to achieve our goal of staying up this year."

In Saturday's last match, Chelsea eased past Wolves thanks to second-half goals from Malo Gusto, Joao Pedro and Pedro Neto at Stamford Bridge.

The hosts seized control from the outset but a wasteful first half had the fans booing them off the pitch at the break before Gusto finally broke the deadlock in the 51st minute.

"They [Wolves] were compact in the first half, we struggled to find space between the lines," Gusto told the BBC. "The second half was better, we found each other more easily and that's why we scored the first goal.

"Three points [are] important before the international break. We are here for the top four, that's our aim."

Enzo Maresca's side are six points behind leaders Arsenal, while Wolves remain rooted to the bottom with two points from 11 games the worst start in the club's history.—Agencies

Vingegaard says back to his best after win in Japan

SAITAMA: Former Tour de France champion Jonas Vingegaard said he was finally back to his best following last year's horrific crash, after finishing his season on Sunday with victory at Japan's Saitama Criterium.

The Dane was a two-time defending Tour de France champion when a high-speed fall in the Tour of the Basque Country in April last year left him hospitalised with a punctured lung and several broken bones.

The accident shook him mentally and physically but he began to pick up the pieces this year.

The 28-year-old finished as runner-up at the Tour de France before claiming a third career Grand Tour win at the Vuelta a Espana in September.

Vingegaard finished his season with another victory in Saitama, and said his return to the top had taken "a bit longer than I thought it would".

"You never really know when you have a bad crash like that if you will get back to the same level you had before," he said.

"It's only by the end of this year that I can see that I'm able to push in the same way that I was before my crash."

Vingegaard missed last year's Paris Olympics and finished far behind his rival Tadej Pogacar in the Tour de France in the months following his crash.

He said he hoped he has put the accident behind him as he looks towards next season.

"It's taken me quite a long time before coming back to the same level," he said. "Slowly you come back to it and hopefully now I can get back to improving rather than trying to get back to the same level."

Vingegaard kicked for home on the final lap to win the Saitama Criterium ahead of Italy's Jonathan Milan and Australian Kaden Groves.

He had to do it the hard way after crashing three-quarters of the way through the 60km course, before getting back on his bike and resuming the race.

"Luckily I didn't hurt myself and I just slipped," said Vingegaard, who was helped back onto his bike by Davide Stella of the UAE team.

"I just lost the wheel and luckily nothing happened and then I could come back and win."

Vingegaard was side by side with Slovenia's Primoz Roglic before making his final attack on the last lap of the circuit.

The Dane said his fall disrupted his race plan but he was able to think on his feet and stay in contention.

"At first you only think about getting back to the bunch," he said. "Then there was an attack that I could follow, and then luckily I could go solo from there."—AFP

Qudratullah, Fatima bag bronze in Riyadh

RIYADH: Pakistan's Qudratullah and Fatima Zahra claimed bronze medals after bowing out in the semi-finals of the boxing event of the sixth Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh on Sunday.

Qudratullah lost the men's 55kg bout to Amir Mohamed Farag Ahmed Kelany of Egypt in the semi-final while Fatima was defeated also by an Egyptian in their last-four fight.

Qudratullah had qualified for the semi-final after overpowering Sudan's Mohamed Othman 10-0 in the quarter-final. Fatima had outclassed Algeria's Hamda Melissa 5-0 in their 60kg quarter-final bout.—Agencies

Alcaraz off to winning start at ATP Finals

TURIN: Top seed Carlos Alcaraz began his bid for a first ATP Finals trophy with a 7-6(5), 6-2 win over Australian Alex de Minaur in their round-robin clash at the season-ending championships in Turin on Sunday.

Alcaraz won his opening ATP Finals match for the first time despite De Minaur's battling display where the Australian recovered from 4-1 down to force a tiebreak in the opening set before the Spaniard came out on top.

The pair traded breaks of serve at the start of the second set, but Alcaraz broke twice more to again lead 4-1 and this time there was no comeback despite De Minaur's valiant effort in the opening match of the Jimmy Connors Group.

Both players were looking to improve on last year's showing, where Alcaraz lost two of his three round-robin matches in straight sets while De Minaur lost all three group matches. Alcaraz had lost the opening match at his previous two appearances.

"It was a really difficult match," said Alcaraz. "On this surface, Alex makes the most of the speed of the ball, he's super fast and really difficult on return. I'm just really happy to get through this really difficult challenge."

After winning the tiebreak, Alcaraz began to enjoy himself a little more, holding his hand to his ear to milk the applause that greeted him winning a long, entertaining rally to hold serve and lead 5-1 and there was no way back for De Minaur.

Alcaraz is also on course to end the year as world number one, and in Turin he must reach the final with at least one round-robin win or sweep his round-robin matches to guarantee himself the award for the second time.

Italian Jannik Sinner needs to retain his title to have any chance of finishing the year in top spot.

One of the loudest cheers in the arena came when Sinner was shown in an advertisement on the large screens, but the crowd will need to wait until Monday to see their favourite in action.

SPAIN'S Carlos Alcaraz hits a return against Alex de Minaur of Australia during their ATP Finals match at Palasport Olimpico on Sunday.—Reuters

The ATP Finals, which features the top eight singles players and doubles teams in the world, has a record prize pool of $15.5 million and offers 1,500 points. The tournament culminates with the final at the Inalpi Arena in Turin on Nov 16.

DJOKOVIC WITHDRAWS

Seven-time ATP Finals champion Novak Djokovic has withdrawn from the tournament due to a shoulder injury, hours after winning his 101st title at the Hellenic Championship in Athens on Saturday.

Finalist Lorenzo Musetti took his place in Turin after Djokovic took almost three hours to beat the Italian 4-6, 6-3, 7-5.

"I was really looking forward to competing in Turin and giving my best," Djokovic posted on social media. "But after today's final in Athens, I'm sad to share that I need to withdraw due to an ongoing injury."Musetti, who needed to beat Djokovic to overtake Canadian Felix Auger-Aliassime to qualify for the tournament, will replace Djokovic in the Jimmy Connors Group, with Alexander Bublik now the first alternate.—Reuters

Bezzecchi dominates Portuguese MotoGP for second win of season

PORTIMAO: Aprilia's Marco Bezzecchi delivered a commanding lights-to-flag victory at the Portuguese Grand Prix on Sunday, claiming his second win of the season and strengthening his grip on third place in the championship with just one round remaining.

The pole-sitter made amends for a lacklustre Saturday sprint performance, where he could only manage third, by controlling the race from start to finish ahead of Gresini Racing's Alex Marquez and KTM's Pedro Acosta.

Bezzecchi's dominance was emphatic, as he finished more than 2.5 seconds clear of Marquez to become the sixth different winner in the last six MotoGP races, while Acosta's late race pace had him close in on his compatriot but settled for third.

APRILIA Racing team's Marco Bezzecchi (R) of Italy competes with BK8 Gresini Racing's Spanish rider Alex Marquez during the Portuguese MotoGP at the Algarve International Circuit on Sunday.—AFP

Ducati's Francesco Bagnaia, who is battling with Bezzecchi for third in the championship behind champion Marc Marquez and runner-up Alex, crashed out of fourth place and finds himself 35 points behind before the final round in Valencia.

"It was a fantastic race for me. This morning I felt better and yesterday evening we worked a lot in the box to try to find that last step that we missed," Bezzecchi said.

"I was super afraid of Pedro and Alex because yesterday they were super quick, but I was also very motivated to try to get a win."

Just as in the sprint, Bezzecchi took the lead into turn one ahead of Acosta while Alex moved up from fifth to third again, before the Gresini Racing rider then used the KTM's slipstream at the start of lap two to move up to second.

But unlike the sprint, there was no wheel-to-wheel battle this time as Bezzecchi and Alex peeled away. Before long, the three riders were split by nearly two seconds at the halfway mark.

Bagnaia was running in fourth when the Ducati rider suddenly crashed out, marking his fourth straight Sunday retirement — the first time it has happened to the two-time champion since his rookie year in MotoGP in 2019.

With five laps left, Alex showed no signs of being able to catch up with Bezzecchi, who was nearly four seconds clear in the lead before the Italian eased off the throttle to conserve his tyres until the chequered flag.

Acosta then found a second wind in the dying stages of the race but Marquez responded to his younger compatriot's charge to defend his second place.

"We are missing a lot of pace and a lot of traction at the beginning of the race," Acosta said. "It doesn't matter how much we manage the tyre. At the end, if we are missing it at the beginning, we lose anyway."—Reuters